

LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES
Safeguarding & Improvement Unit

Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Child Protection Annual Report 2014 -15

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Executive Summary

- 1.1 This document sets out the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) report on the performance of the Child Protection (CP) system in Leicestershire during 2014-15.
- 1.2 There are strengths, challenges and areas for improvement as set out below. The report identifies some development areas and includes a work programme for 2015-16 within the appendices.
- 1.3 Overall, the IRO Service in Leicestershire is really pleased with what it has achieved over the last year and is confident that it has operated to a high standard and met statutory requirements. The vision moving forward is one of excellence and the improvements identified in this report will help build on what has been achieved and is working well to enhance the service even further.

1.4 Strengths – What’s working well?

- The implementation of Signs of Safety style Child Protection Conferences that has been received in a positive way by parents.
- Effective role of the dedicated Advocate (Children’s Rights Officer – CRO) for CP that has developed over this period and has demonstrated effective support for young people’s voice being independently introduced into the child protection conference process. This has also led to appeals being made by young people on being made subject to Child Protection Plans which is welcomed as a way to further engage them in the process and for their voice to be influential.
- No increase on complaints over this period. Complaints are welcomed as a way of ensuring the service is behaving in a professional manner in the conduct of its business and as an attempt to try and engage the complainant in understanding the process.
- The implementation of the multi-agency Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) & Missing team.

1.5 Challenges – What are we worried about?

- The need for a more proportionate number of multiple category child protection plans, to ensure that the categories of abuse used when children are made subject to a plan are more consistently reflective of the primary concern for that child.
- Linked with the above, ensuring more consistent appropriate use of the Emotional Abuse category of risk, in line with the definition set out in Working Together and DfE guidance.
- To make further progress on that already achieved over 2014-15 as regards timeliness of social work reports to families and IROs for Child Protection Conferences.

- Occasions of non-attendance at child protection conferences from police as well as some schools – key partner LSCB agencies - that have meant some conferences not being able to go ahead as planned.
- Achieve further consistency with the accuracy and timeliness of data input into Frameworki.
- The need to further improve the current system in the IRO Service, to ensure a more coherent and robust set of data is established regarding practice issues and themes arising from the child protection conference process – to assist in developing practice.

1.6 **Areas for Improvement – What needs to happen?**

- Agency representation at all Child Protection Conferences must be secured to ensure that conferences are quorate and can take place within timescales set out in the LSCB procedures.
- Agency provision of accurate and concise information in the prescribed LSCB format and aligned with the Signs of Safety approach for Child Protection Conferences.
- Consistent and regular recording and monitoring of IRO challenge and escalation. This to be collated into Thematic Reports being produced and presented to the monthly meeting with the Assistant Director.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 has been replaced by Working Together 2015 and now provides the current guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The LSCB define inter-agency processes and protocols to comply with the relevant guidance.
- 2.2 Where the agencies most involved judge that a child may continue to, or be likely to suffer significant harm, the local authority's Children's Social Care Service should convene a Child Protection Conference. The aim of the conference is to enable those professionals most involved with the child and its family to assess all relevant information and plan how best to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child.
- 2.3 This report is an opportunity to highlight areas of good practice and areas that require improvement in relation to child protection and is the third such report produced. The report identifies key themes and areas of work that the Safeguarding and Improvement Unit has prioritised during the year 2014-15.
- 2.4 The data used in the report represents that used by the service to track performance in relation to child protection and children using sexually abusive behaviour (CUSAB). With the transfer of responsibility to the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) & Missing Multi-agency Team, the data and analysis on missing and CSE will no longer form part of this report, but will be subject to its own report presented by that team.

3.0 Purpose of Service & Legal Context

- 3.1 The Child Protection Conference process is a formal meeting convened under Working Together 2015 where there are serious concerns regarding the safety of a child. Working Together 2015 p43 sets out the role and remit of the Chair of the Child Protection Case conference, in that s/he:

(I)s accountable to the Director of Children and Family Services. Where possible the same person should chair subsequent child protection reviews;

Should be a professional, independent of operational and/or line management responsibilities for the case; and

Should meet the child and parents in advance to ensure they understand the purpose and the process.

- 3.2 The Safeguarding & Improvement Unit (SIU) was restructured in 2011 to reflect the ethos of managing and developing a high quality conference and review service, ensuring the application of high quality improvement, quality assurance and internal challenge activity.
- 3.3 The work is undertaken in accordance with legal requirements and departmental policies and procedures. The SIU's key principles in relation to child protection are to:

- Deliver an efficient monitoring and review service
- Quality assure, analyse and provide feedback in relation to best practice standards and incorporate learning from inspections and service recipient feedback
- Provide active internal challenge in relation to cases and repeat Child Protection planning and drift in Child Protection planning
- Highlight areas of improvement to senior managers

3.4 The IRO Service in Leicestershire is sited within the Safeguarding & Improvement Unit (SIU), part of Children's Social Care (CSC), which sits within the Children and Family Services (CFS). Whilst part of CSC, it remains independent of the line management of resources for children in care and the operational social work teams.

3.5 The effective independence of the IRO Service in Leicestershire continues to be monitored and considered across the IRO management team and the position remains that overall, independence is not felt to be compromised, supported by evidence of challenge and support for this at senior levels within the authority.

4.0 Team Structure & Profile

4.1 The structure of the SIU has seen a number of changes since its inception in 1997 with the last major restructure taking place over 2011-12 which facilitated a strengthened and enhanced IRO and management function, (referenced in the 2012-13 annual report) including increased capacity, in recognition of the need for the IRO Service to respond to a number of national and local drivers.

4.4.2 The SIU has become increasingly involved in managing and coordinating responses to a number of high profile complex abuse investigations, including contributing to strategic and operational developments to improve the local response to child sexual exploitation, trafficking and missing children.

4.4.3 A new and separate resource has been established to support this work – Multi Agency Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Team – a departmental priority over the last year. The skills, knowledge and experience of staff within the IRO Service enabled this project to take place with staff from the service being seconded into new specialist roles. This has meant further changes for the IRO service and configuration of the IRO management team which has brought a new set of challenges as regards capacity. Arrangements have been put into place at the beginning of 2015-16, to enable this to be resolved permanently.

4.4.4 The IRO Service has two Team Managers with lead responsibilities for children in care and child protection respectively who manage the team of IROs; the SIU Service Manager has lead responsibility for the IRO Service.

4.4.5 Collectively, the IRO team has many years of social work and management experience, professional expertise and knowledge and there are a number who have developed more specialist roles during the course of their time in the service and are able to offer consultation in areas including but not confined to:

- *CUSAB (Children Using Sexually Abusive Behaviour)*
- *Therapeutic support services*
- *Children with disabilities and complex care needs*
- *Youth Offending/Remand/Secure Accommodation*
- *Mental Health*
- *UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children)*
- *MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements) Level 3 (Team Manager acts as Core Panel Member)*
- *PREVENT/CHANNEL*

4.4.6 Continuing challenges with capacity in the IRO service has meant a need to guard carefully against IROs undertaking too many additional duties and extended responsibilities that are not specified in the statutory guidance for the role, yet create a balance that allows for an enhanced skill set that can contribute to quality and improvement developments.

4.4.7 As is the established case in Leicestershire, there are IRO Services in other local authorities that have a dual role and undertake their statutory functions as outlined in the IRO Handbook, as well as the chairing of all Child Protection Conferences (CPCs) convened in the authority. However, there are a number of authorities that have chosen to separate out these functions as they have interpreted the chairing of child protection conferences as additional duties that could detract from the priority given to children in care.

4.4.8 The approach taken in Leicestershire is mostly but not universally seen as a benefit in relation to the continuity it provides to children and young people on their journey through the child protection process and into the care system (*The role of Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) in England - NCB March 2014*). Such an approach allows flexibility within the team and provides more effective oversight across children's' situations and the service provided from the IRO team to Child Protection as well as Children in Care has continued to be given equal priority and status.

4.4.9 At a regional IRO seminar held in March 2014 the Ofsted representative advised that Ofsted do not favour any particular model or configuration of IRO Services; the focus of their judgment remains on its quality and effectiveness.

4.4.10 To date, there have been no plans to change the configuration of the IRO Service in Leicestershire but specialist Signs of Safety developments in the child protection conference processes over 2014-15, alongside the growing demands on IROs to make a difference for outcomes for children in care has required this to be considered again. Consideration of the best way to deliver these functions and use resources to best affect needs to take place over 2015-16.

- 4.4.11 The make-up of the IRO team has seen some changes over the reporting period. Whilst retaining a core, more established membership, it has welcomed some new permanent staff but been impacted by staff secondments and extended periods of sick leave by several staff, with Q3 (October – December 2014) the hardest hit. Additional agency IROs have been a necessity in order to be able to continue to deliver the core business which has been a significant challenge at various periods especially the latter half of 2014-15.
- 4.4.12 At the time of writing, the IRO service is operating with 11.15 FTE IROs (+ 0.5 FTE recent vacancy). This includes 4 agency IROs, 3 of whom have minimal involvement with children in care work and focus mainly on the child protection conference chairing role. Careful consideration is given to the type of work allocated to temporary staff within the team in order to continue to support sufficient priority being given to consistent professional relationships with children, young people, their families and carers.
- 4.4.13 The SIU provides an independent chair (IRO) for all Child Protection Case Conferences. Where possible the same IRO chairs all the conferences for that family, unless operational issues intervene that requires an alternative IRO to chair. This has been a challenge during the period of reporting as it has seen the need to deploy experienced Agency IRO's to assist with the staffing pressures the IRO Service has faced. The IRO always introduces themselves to the family and child (if present) to explain their role, the purpose and format of the meeting, and to establish any concerns or worries the family have about the process. These meetings take place 15 minutes prior to the start Child Protection Conference, though on a number of occasions IRO's report these meetings lasting longer due to the family not having had the Social Workers report or there not being adequate preparation undertaken in advance of the meeting. Where the report has been shared and a full discussion with the family has taken place the meetings are reported by the IRO's to be shorter and the time used in a more focused way to establish the risks and develop the plan.
- 4.4.14 In 2014 it was possible with the reshaping of the management team and the additional support from the Grow Safety Project Team to begin the development of the Signs of Safety style Child Protection Conferences. This was introduced as a prototype at one of the Locality Offices and with Review Child Protection Conferences to begin. A small team of IRO's formed the cadre of individuals who wished to act as trailblazers, and from who others in the team could learn and develop skills. A fuller discussion of this process is set out in its own section below (5.4).

5.0 Child Protection Conference Service

5.1 Conference Activity

5.1.1 The activity of the unit in chairing both Initial and Review Child Protection Conferences in this year compared to 2011-12, 2012-13, and 2013-14 has been:

2011-12	1165 (this included 5 Rutland conferences)
2012-13	1105
2013-14	1031
2014-15	1095

5.1.2 The number of Child Protection Conferences convened and chaired has slightly increased after a trend showing a small reduction over the previous 3 year period. This has not shifted the downward trend observed over the previous 3 years where a steady reduction in the number of children subject to plans measured at year end: (31st March) from 524 (2011-12), 393 (2012-13) and increasing to 446 (2013-14), decreasing to 398 (2014-15). The activity over the periods Q2 and Q3 shows an increase of children subject to plans and this may therefore explain the increase. Such trends can have impacts on capacity of the service to respond, and then has a ripple effect through other parts of the work (particularly if a corresponding rise in activity and numbers of children being looked after is taking place). This is distributed as follows (the difference in the figures across the years was to show a finer grade description of the activity):

Type of Conference	2014-15	2013-14	2012-13
Initial	264	274	256
Initial Pre-birth	76	64	57
Initial/Pre-birth Initial	3	-	-
Initial Receiving -in	19	25	21
Initial Re-convened	0	2	2
1 st Review	334	296	284
Review/Initial	1	-	-
Subsequent Review	398	370	485

5.1.3 It is interesting to note that the activity around child protection conferences increased over the middle quarters following the upward trend as it developed in the final quarter of 2013-14. Yet this current period ended with net decrease. **See Table 1 in the Appendix.** When looking at the activity over the reporting period of plan starting & ending it was seen that the start (April 2014) of the period the number of Children on plans had dipped from the position at the end of the previous period (March 2013) an net decrease of 31. Yet through the subsequent months a steady increase was experienced, where between May & August a net increase of 60 Children on CP Plans is recorded. This corresponds to the point in August where the highest number of plans was recorded for the whole period (473). Consideration needs to be

given as to what factors have been influential in this – to be taken forward in the 2015-16 Work Plan.

- 5.1.4 In the last report (2013 -14) it was identified that a number of Child Protection Plans in this period ended at the first review (149; 33%) taken as at 31st March. This would indicate that either there was effective and focused intervention that managed to reduce the level of concerns, or there may have alternative approaches to manage the risks in some of these cases to prevent them entering the Child Protection process. In this period it still forms a significant number (117; 29%). It is noteworthy that in this period the number of repeat CP plans starting was higher than that reported in the previous period (17.2% compared to 12.6%). **See Table 2 in the Appendix.**
- 5.1.5 At the end of the reporting period (Q4) of the 398 children on CP plans the patterns of the most frequent single categories used in plans are Neglect (20%; 2013-14:18%) and Emotional (19%; 2013-14:15%), which demonstrates a further convergence in the proportions over the period in these categories. Multiple categories continue to be a significant level, showing a determined pattern over the final 3 quarters. Multiple categories represented (47%; 2013-14: 57%) of the total number that is where there are 2 or more categories used. Often the categories of Neglect and Emotional Abuse are used together and this is not always necessary, reference is not often made to the definition of Emotional Abuse set out by Working Together 2015 and the DfE. IROs will continue to challenge this within conferences to ensure the category of Emotional Abuse is only used when appropriate. There is also a rigorous internal challenge within SIU to challenge the use of multiple categories. **See Table 3 in the Appendix.** This will be the subject of challenge from the IRO's to all agencies to ensure coherence in planning in a way that imparts clarity for the family. The introduction of Child Protection Conferencing using the principles of Signs of Safety will also underpin the focus of the plan on clearly describing the harm to the child(ren) and move to the use of single categories.
- 5.1.6 The significant factors indicated for a child being subject to a plan are in line with national figures and research. The often cited 'Toxic Trio' (Alcohol Abuse, Domestic Violence and Parental Mental Health) account for the majority of factors involved for all conferences (initial and review). These factors individually are significant but when put together illustrate the nature of the households in which children are living. In this period the most significant factor was Domestic Violence (though the preferred term is Domestic Abuse). It is interesting to note that it increases in number as a factor from the initial CP Conference to the review CP conference (initial & receiving-in = 344 + 15; review = 505). It is not known what factors may be affecting this pattern, other than increased understanding and awareness of the campaigns on this issue. **See Table 4 in the Appendix.**
- 5.1.7 The majority of children subject to a Child Protection Plan fall predominately in the 0-9 age range (70%), with the greater proportion in the 0-4 age range (43%). The number of children subject to plans who are 10 and above has remained fairly stable.

5.1.8 The ethnic profile of children subject to plans is majority white, accounting for over 85% of children on Child Protection Plans in this period compared with 80% in the previous report though again it was consistent across the year. The representation of children from other than white ethnic origin shows varies little through the year, or from the previous reporting year. **See Table 5 in the Appendix**

5.2 Conference Performance

5.2.1 There had been concerns highlighted by IROs in the previous report (2013-14) of families not receiving the child protection conference social work report within the LSCB timescales. The time prior to the conference when the report is to be received is contained in LSCB Procedures Chapter 1.4.1 Section 11.2. The parents should receive the report for an initial conference at least 2 working days in advance and it should be with the chair 1 working day in advance. The report for a review conference in accordance with Chapter 1.4.4 Section 4 is to be with the parent and the IRO at least 3 working days in advance.

5.2.2 In 2014-15 there have been improvements quarter on quarter in achieving the target (% totals receiving reports earlier – 17.2% Q1; 19.7% Q2; 24.2% Q3 & 29.6% Q4) but performance still falls significantly below the standard needed to support good practice. The trends are moving in the right direction with the percentage receiving reports on the day of the conference decreasing quarter on quarter – down to 39.3% in Q4 compared to 55.6% in Q1. Those getting reports the previous day increased from 22.3% Q1 to 28.9% Q4 as well as those getting reports earlier increasing. **See Table 6 in the Appendix.**

5.2.3 The need for the IRO to be provided the report in advance in order to prepare for the meeting in the best possible way was also identified as an area for improvement. In 2013-14 it was not possible to provide more than anecdotal reports. From June 2014 the log kept by the SIU to track progress of work included a field to record receipt of the report. The data produced however is not robust due to the IRO's not recording the receipt for 42% of conferences (259 of the 900 conference; June, 2014 - March 2015).

5.2.4 The performance around CP conferences held within timescales was subject to scrutiny over this period. The performance for Review Child Protection Conferences being on the whole robust, but common themes emerged over the period for those conferences postponed and then going out of timescale. Amongst the reasons occurring across the period were:

- The non-attendance of key organisations that resulted in the conference not being quorate and the absence of key information.
- Issues with the interpreter service – which was escalated to the contract compliance team to address.
- Locality teams not arranging in sufficient time with the SIU sometimes due to errors in dates on Fwi, and on a small number of occasions because of Locality staffing issues.

5.2.5 The IRO Service offers consultation to Locality Social Work Team and partner organisations in child protection work. When this has happened IRO's report that it has resulted in the preparation for conference being more effective, particularly with planning for conferences with multiple parents/split families. There have also been occasions where advance consultation has resulted in offering an alternative approach to a conference and managing the safety and risks in a different way e.g. Signs of Safety Meeting. The further use of this approach may offer a way forward in identifying cases where an alternative approach to building safety for the child may improve outcomes.

5.2.6 Over the reporting period, an action plan has been in place that has addressed the delay in the distribution of the record of the conference. This has seen some improvements and monitoring systems have been put in place through tri-angulation of information collected from the conference clerk team and the IRO's to ensure that any delays are identified. The SIU Managers review workflow on a weekly basis. For a period, a format to record the conference outcome in one document was put in place and this did significantly improve the timeliness of distribution. This was to be an interim measure whilst work was undertaken on developing a template that would be used to capture the record of the conferences undertaken in the Signs of Safety approach. At the time of writing this template is being developed.

5.3 Agency Contribution & Participation

5.3.1 It is expected that agency representatives provide accurate and concise information to conference in the agreed format in advance of the conference. The observation from the IRO's is that this is rarely provided by some agencies. Primary Health practitioners do provide comprehensive reports in a timely way for conferences. The reports received from the Child Protection Co-ordinators of Leicestershire Police are often received in advance, though the presence of representatives to speak to the information is often variable. The introduction of the need for prior notice of 7 days from the police has at times resulted in such information not being available. This often arises due to the SIU clerks not receiving the invites from social workers within sufficient time to enable it to go out to the police. This is a distinct challenge for initial conferences. There has been further positive discussion with police colleagues and this was helpful in understanding the respective pressures on both services. This resulted in an overall improvement as the reasons were explained and understood. There are still occasional problems that arise from late invite notification, and this is addressed on an individual Social Worker/Team Manager basis.

Reports are rarely provided from GP's in the agreed format. The information when provided is often as a letter containing the factual information but rarely with a view or analysis. Information from schools is also received in a variety of formats, and rarely in the prescribed LSCB format. This was the situation when reporting in 2013-14, and there has been no change in this reporting period.

5.3.2 The timescale for reports from agency representative reaching the family has not been the subject of such detailed scrutiny as those of Social Workers. There is also not the same level of data available as receipt of agency reports are not monitored outside of the record of the meeting. Suffice to say that the view from the IRO's is that information from agency representatives (apart from Primary Health representatives) is most frequently provided verbally and that adds to the amount of information that needs to be recorded contemporaneously within the Case Conference. This has been the pattern from the observations of practice by SIU Team Managers as one of the issues contributing to the length of the meetings.

5.4 Implementation of Signs of Safety Child Protection Conferences

5.4.1 As part of the 2013-14 Action Plan it was set out that SIU would lead on the introduction of Signs of Safety style Child Protection Case Conferences. The existing approach of delivering CP Conferences was established in the 1990's and has not changed in keeping with developments in research and practice. The existing approach lacked explicit methods to capture involvement of children & parents; and lacked the mechanisms to build safety through strengths within the family. The developments within the wider service using SoS methodology with the departmental Grow Safety strategy meant that CP conferences were out of step with the experience of children, families and the workforce. A start date was set for the implementation in September, 2014. This followed extensive preparation of the service for the change including the use of external SoS licensed trainers and consultants in providing training sessions to the whole team, and the careful strategy considered in the introduction of a prototype format. The decision was to undertake Review Child Protection Conference's (RCPCs) in the first phase and only in one Locality. A small implementation team was self-selected comprising 4 IRO's and 3 Conference clerks. The implementation plan included a questionnaire for parents which they were invited to complete immediately after the conference. A questionnaire for agency representatives was sent out to be completed on line at the end of the initial 3 month evaluation period. Regular SIU staff meetings and a session with the Locality Social Workers were held to review the progress of the prototype and make adjustments accordingly.

5.4.2 The response from the parents from the completion of the questionnaires and comments made to the IRO following the Child Protection Conference were very positive. **Results of the questionnaire are set out in Table 7.** The comments contained in the questionnaires reflected the positive view parent's gave to the process:

"It's better on the wall as you can read what's said and if you forget, you can look at it."

"It's better this way, more clearer"

"Better on the wall, could prepare well, seeing the past shocked me."

"Better being able to read what people have said can see all the positives."

5.4.3 The responses from agency representatives have been mixed and less positive so far. **Results are set out in Table 8.** The comments reflected the perception of the varied benefits that could be identified from this approach:

“This is a complex and enduring case that the format was unable to bring improved clarity to.”

“I think that attempts were made to identify 'strengths' that were not really strengths in terms of protecting the child - it felt like it was more about ensuring that something appeared in that column to be able to say to the parent. The 'strengths' were set at a much lower level than would be expected as 'good enough'.”

“It was clearly difficult for the Chair to write on the wall and chair the meeting - this also seems quite an archaic way of managing - I think that improved use of technology - eg a projector and an ipad or laptop would actually improve this I think.”

“I feel that the new format is far clearer for the family and far more inclusive. It gives them the opportunity to say what is going well which is really important. I think having everything written down in black and white makes things seem less overwhelming and more achievable.”

The impression formed from these comments is that some more work needs to be undertaken with our agency colleagues to assist in the understanding of the approach. It had not been possible to provide briefing sessions to agencies beyond a short introduction included in the invitation letters sent out prior to each Child Protection conference. This may have assisted in providing clarity around the principles behind it. It is of interest that the perceptions are at odds with that of the parent's, who felt more included and felt clarity had been increased by using this approach.

5.4.4 Next Steps

The implementation plan continues to move forward and at the time of writing all RCPCs are being undertaken using Signs of Safety format and methodology. Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) will commence second quarter. The decision to approach the implementation in this way was to reflect the need to “bed-in” the approach, and to accommodate the impact of the Transformation Programme on level of preparedness of some of the Locality Social work Teams undergoing change of structure and personnel..

The learning will be used to refine the model and from second quarter – July 2015 the plan is that all Child Protection Conferences will be undertaken Signs of Safety style.

There will be a need to work with the partner organisations to inform them of the reason for the change and their role in supporting the process.

5.5 The Child Protection Advocacy Service

- 5.5.1 The provision of a dedicated advocate to support young people in the child protection conference process began on 3rd June 2013.
- 5.5.2 The service is offered to every young person over 10 years old who is subject of a child protection conference.
- 5.5.3 The referral system is managed by the SIU clerical team who identify young people aged 10 and over at the time when a booking is made for a CP conference. The advocate is then notified by e-mail and makes contact to set up a meeting with the young person if they wish to use the service. This contact is initially in collaboration with the parents.
- 5.5.4 Over the period since it began operating directly there have been 141 referrals to the service. The service was provided to 107 (including 68 who were already receiving support from 2013-14) young people with the advocate.
- 5.5.5 A more detailed report is being prepared by the Children's Rights Officer for the CP Advocacy Service.

5.6 Complaints, Appeals & Dissent

- 5.6.1 In this period there have been 9 complaints, one of which was from a young person. The reasons for complaints were as follows:

Reason	Number
Parent disputed accuracy of agency information presented to Child Protection Conference	3
Parent dispute over the process or conduct of the meeting	4
Young person complaint over conduct of meeting and exclusion from meeting	1
Parent complaint on sharing information within the conference	1

All of the above complaints were resolved at Stage 1.

In this period there have been 2 Appeals, both being made by young people. Both were resolved without moving to the LSCB Appeal procedure. This was achieved by the IRO meeting with the young people with the support of the CP Advocate.

There was one agency dissent that was escalated to Team Manager for resolution. The agency representative was from a neighbouring Local Authority. The matter was successfully resolved by letter and telephone discussion with the representative.

5.7 Challenges & Escalation

- 5.7.1 The SIU has a role in identifying areas of concern in practice and undertaking challenge where it is required. In this reporting period it is known that IROs have had a number of lower level practice discussions on cases. Where there have been more serious concerns there has been a professional challenge.

There have been 10 occasions where the IRO has needed to raise issues with Locality Team Managers. In 9 cases this was in regards to issues within Children & Family Services, in 1 case it was in regards to the Locality pursuing issues with another agency (Health). The most frequent reason for contact with Locality Team Managers was in regards to clarity around planning. This was a result of objectives of child protection plans not being effectively completed in a timely way. These discussions saw effective dialogue and no need for further involvement by the IRO, apart from one case that was raised to Service Manager Level.

One case saw extensive involvement of the IRO as a result of cross border issues around action and responsibility to establish clear safety planning and protection plans.

- 5.7.2 It has not been possible in this reporting period to develop and improve the recording and monitoring of this area of work. This has been due to the need for the SIU Team Manager to cover the operational IRO service work for extensive periods of time, as a result of pressures and demands on the team arising as outlined in section 4 of this report. .
- 5.7.3 The development of Thematic Reports each quarter has also not been progressed due to the same impact although contributions have been made in quarterly service manager performance reports. It is an aspiration to introduce a reporting process in the next period (2015-16).

6.0 **Children who go Missing and Child Sexual Exploitation**

With the introduction of the specialist team during this period these areas will be subject of a separate report from that service.

7.0 **Children Using Sexually Abusive Behaviour (CUSAB)**

- 7.1 SIU has continued to have a lead IRO for CUSAB, provide consultation to social workers and chair Multi agency-risk assessment meetings for children who use sexually abusive behaviours. SIU had been able to chair all meetings for children and young people under this category despite severity of the case until October 2014 when unfortunately due to resources this was no longer the case. SIU continue to offer a consultancy service to all cases but are currently only able to chair CUSAB meetings for children looked after or complex cases such as those being arrested/charged with an offence. Following a consultation it is agreed if a less complex case can be chaired by the locality team manager.

7.2 The lead IRO for CUSAB has updated the LSCB procedures leaflet for parents in conjunction with LSCB. It was the plan that a piece of work would also be completed in the reporting period to update the procedures to make the CUSAB role and expectations clear and then deliver this to locality social workers through their team meetings, unfortunately this has not been achievable due to capacity but will be taken forward over 2015-16 aligned to the changes that are taking place around commissioning CUSAB interventions/support services.

7.3 During this reporting period SIU have chaired 35 CUSAB meetings.

8.0 Developments for 2015-16

8.1 Child Protection Conferences

To complete the introduction of the Signs of Safety Approach across ICPC's and all localities. A programme of continued skill development within the IRO's will be integral to deepen practice and build a comprehensive delivery. A review of the format that records the outcome of the Child Protection Conferences will be completed so that it is fully aligned with the Signs of Safety principles and format of the meeting.

The introduction of a Notification form to track the progress on concerns, as well as good practice. The existing form that captures data following the Child Protection Conferences will also be amended to reflect areas on which the SIU needs to monitor, and be aligned to the Ofsted framework as well as Signs of Safety.

To further develop a reporting process that more fully captures the challenges to child protection planning. Work had commenced in 2014-15 to produce a notification process, and this needs to be completed so that it can inform the Thematic Quarterly reports.

To review the present monitoring form that is completed following the conference so that it better captures the information required to monitor performance. At present the data to assess and monitor SIU activity is spread across several databases, which is not efficient.

8.2 Development of a multi-agency CSE, Missing Trafficking Team was achieved in the period 2014-15.

8.3 The review of the CUSAB role was affected by a number of staffing and resource issues through this period so was not progressed as fully as intended. There is a need for a more comprehensive review of the approach to CUSAB and this is highlighted in the section above (7)

Martin R Wilson
Team Manager
Safeguarding & Improvement Unit
June 2015

Appendix 1

IRO Service (CP) 2014-15 Annual Work Programme Performance and Outcomes

Action	Who	When	RAG	COMMENTARY
Improve the level of attendance and report analysis by Leicestershire Police at child protection conferences	IRO Managers with Police/LSCB	September 2014	A	Martin Wilson (TM) has liaised and met with CAIU to explore changes to report format to conference. The issue of attendance has yet to be developed further and this may be best progressed through LSCB in the context of wider concerns around agencies attendance.
Implement an improved child protection conference process that delivers an approach aligned to the Growing Safety approach.	IRO Service	September 2014	G	The implementation was successfully initiated in September 2014 with a prototype format. It has since developed further and the work programme for 2015/16 will see it being introduced across all CPC's and Localities.
To put in place the LCC operational team within the CSE and Missing Multi Agency Team	SIU Managers	September 2014	G	CSE and Missing Multi Agency Team is now established and responsibility sits outside of the IRO Service.
To review and develop the process and procedures for CUSAB referrals and meetings	IRO Manager/IRO	September 2014	A	A work programme was developed but due to operational pressures within SIU it was not possible to fully complete within the timeframe set. It identified a need for wider consideration through LSCB procedures as little consistency around referral and action is in place.
To establish a programme of review on the child protection process that assesses the quality of the service both internally and	IRO Manager	December 2014	G	The format for the Thematic report is in place. The development of a suite of programmes to run specific reports could not be developed over this period due to the pressures within SIU. This will need to be progressed within the review of challenge and escalation tracking process.

externally (this will include CSC and partner agencies)				
To review and further develop the process around missing notifications	Martin Wilson	September 2014	G	This was completed and further refinement was taken forward by the Multi-agency CSE & Missing Team

Appendix 2

IRO Service (CP) 2015-16 Annual Work Programme

Action	Who	When	RAG	Commentary
To further develop and refine the SoS Model in Child Protection Conferences. To include all aspects of delivery, recording and monitoring	IRO Service	March 2016		The prototype has been successfully introduced across CFS and through this period it will encompass ICPC's & RCPC's. A document template to record the outcome of the CPC, including the outline CP Plan will be finalised and adopted as the LSCB agreed format. A programme of professional development will be maintained for the IRO Team so as to deepen skills. Further work with partner agencies around the vision and development will be progressed. A formal comprehensive review will take place during Q4 2015/16 to establish the next phases of refinement and development.
To move to the use of a single category of harm in Child Protection Plans and to ensure the chosen category is aligned clearly with DfE definitions	IRO Service with partners	September 2015		The rationale is in place for IRO's to embed this in practice during the further development of Signs of Safety style CP Conferences. It will require additional work with CFS & partner organisations so that the approach is understood.
To understand the factors that are influential/contributory to the conference activity and child protection plans trend.	IRO Service with partners	Over 2015-16		Analysis of activity over 2014-15.
Improve the level of attendance and report analysis by all agencies	IRO Service with partners & LSCB	September 2015		A short programme of work between LSCB/SIU will explore this issue and identify recommendations for future action.

to Child Protection Conferences				
To review and develop the process and procedures for CUSAB referrals and meetings	IRO Service & LSCB	November 2015		Review to ensure reference and influence out of recent evidence from national research and developments in this area.
To establish a programme of review on the child protection process that assesses the quality of the service both internally and externally (this will include CFS and partner agencies)	IRO Service	September 2015		This programme will incorporate the implementation of the revised Notification process (for escalating concerns/challenges/good practice), a revised monitoring data form to capture key indicator information in line with new processes and guidance, and a summary thematic report process.

Appendix 3

Tables of figures

Table 1 – Conference Activity

Table2 – Child Protection Conferences ending

CHILD PROTECTION - Trends

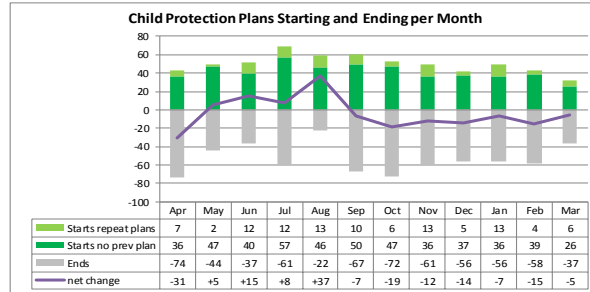
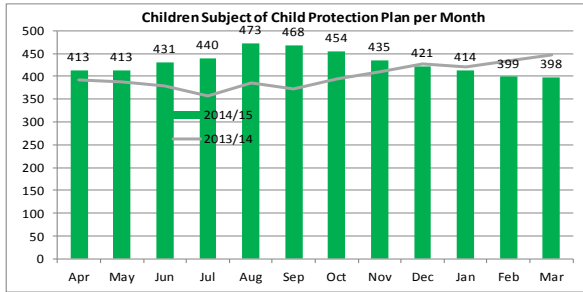


Table 3 – Categories of Abuse

Number of plans in each category of abuse	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Neglect	67	58	78	81
Physical	25	31	23	33
Emotional	81	98	70	74
Sexual	15	16	21	22
Multiple	240	262	229	184
None		1		
Total	428	466	421	394

Table 4 – Significant Factors identified on CP Plan

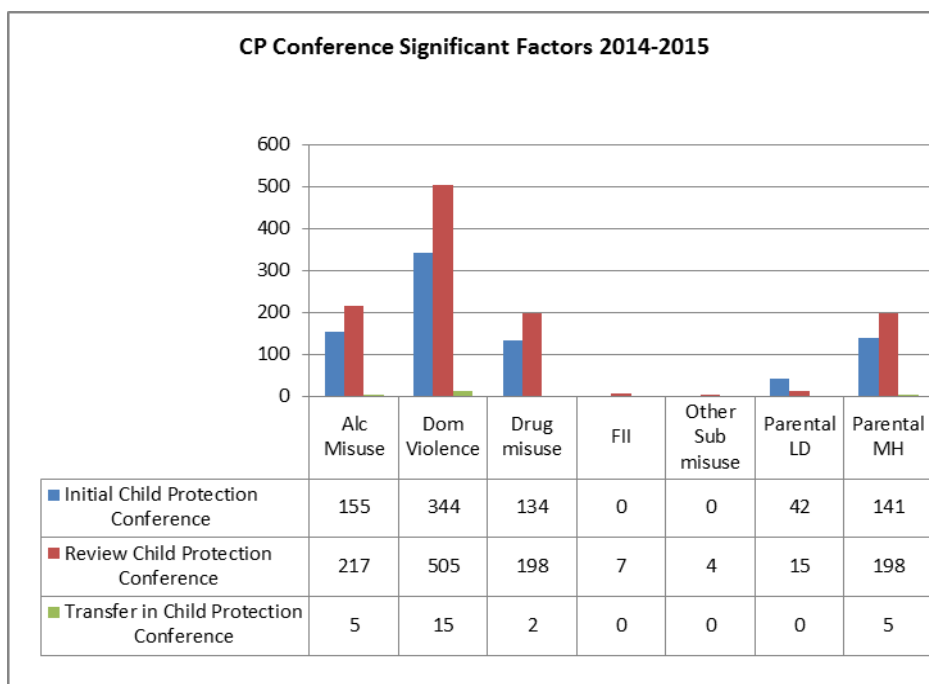


Table 5 - Ethnicity

Ethnicity of CP Plans	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
White	376	412	368	336
Asian or Asian British	16	16	11	17
Black or Black British	7	5	5	4
Mixed	27	22	19	14
Not Stated	1	3	8	12
Other Ethnic Group	1	6	3	5
Blank		2	7	6
	428	466	421	394

Table 6 – Receipt of report by Family

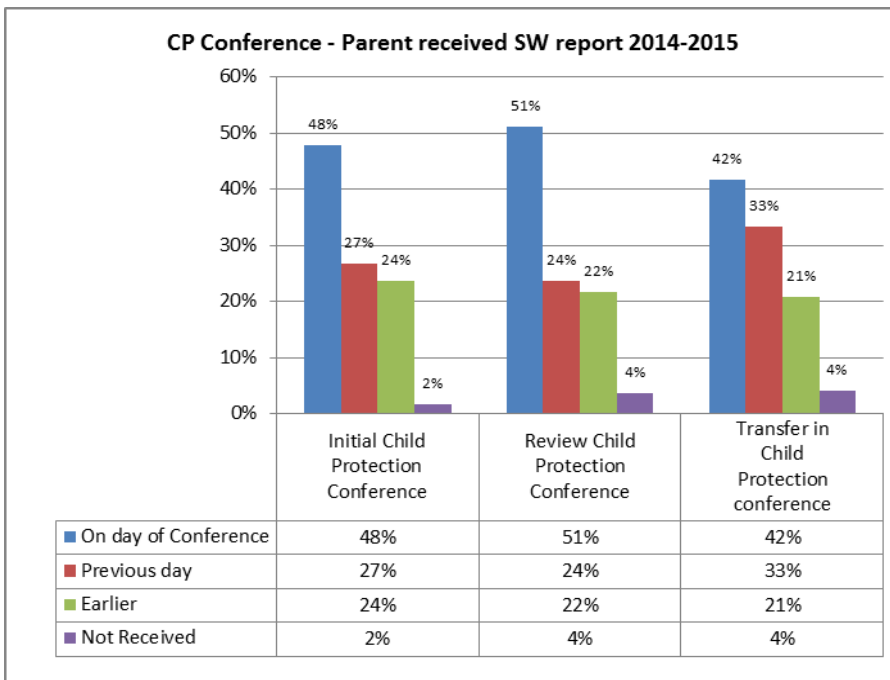


Table 7

Parent Questionnaire Data from SoS RCPC Prototype (Sept- Dec 2014) – Total = 60 responses from 34 RCPC’s

Did you feel prepared for the case conference?

Not at all	5%
A little	18%
Somewhat	22%
A lot	32%
Completely	23%

Did the conference chair help you take a full part in the conference?

Not at all	0%
A little	10%
Somewhat	7%
A lot	30%
Completely	53%

Did the use of clear language help you understand the conference?

Not at all	0%
A little	7%
Somewhat	7%
A lot	37%
Completely	57%

Did you feel involved in the conference?

Not at all	0%
A Little	7%
Somewhat	20%
A lot	27%
Completely	47%

Did you understand the result of the conference?

Not at all	0%
A little	5%
Somewhat	12%
A lot	23%
Completely	60%

Table 8

Agency Questionnaire Data from SoS RCPC Prototype (Sept- Dec 2014) – Total = 11 responses from 34 RCPC's

Did the Signs of Safety format of the Child Protection Conference improve the clarity of the concerns around the family?

Not at all	18%
A little	18%
Somewhat	18%
A lot	27%
Completely	18%

Did the Signs of Safety format of the Child Protection Conference improve the clarity of the strengths around the family?

Not at all	18%
A little	18%
Somewhat	27%
A lot	18%
Completely	18%

Did writing the information and planning on the wall improve clarity and understanding of the issues for the family?

Not at all	9%
A little	18%
Somewhat	27%
A lot	27%
Completely	18%

Would you say that the plan that resulted from the Child Protection Conference was clearer for the family?

Not at all	9%
A little	18%
Somewhat	36%
A lot	27%
Completely	9%

Would you say that the plan that resulted from the Child Protection Conference was clearer for the professionals involved?

Not at all	18%
A little	9%
Somewhat	36%
A lot	36%
Completely	0%

Did the approach change your view of the way forward for the family, e.g. change your view from a Child Protection Plan to Child in Need plan or vice versa?

Not at all	46%
A little	27%
Somewhat	9%
A lot	18%
Completely	0%